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ABSTRACT

The quality of instruction in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students is based on comprehensive preservice teacher education programs and instructional supervision of beginning teachers by a qualified veteran teacher. However, declining enrollments in special schools for the deaf and the fragmented placement of hearing-impaired students in public schools has resulted in a lack of instructional leadership available to beginning teachers, particularly in rural areas. The Intermountain Instructional Leadership Program (IILP) at Idaho State University prepares post-master's special education teachers to provide instructional leadership for deaf and hearing-impaired students in a variety of public school placement options. The focus of training is on a collaborative consultant approach to working with schools, agencies, organizations, communities, and parents in improving the education for deaf and hearing-impaired students. The program consists of 14 months of training resulting in an educational specialist's degree. Graduate students complete 30 hours of post-master's courses at Idaho State University, plan and implement a professional study resulting in a research report, and complete a practicum or internship. Currently, the IILP is developing a "Professional Leadership" series that gives students exposure via satellite courses to instructional leaders in the field of deaf education. It is hoped that this graduate program, with its emphasis on placements in rural areas, will contribute significantly to the development of appropriate, quality educational programs and services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in rural public schools. (LP)

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PREPARING CONSULTANT SPECIALISTS: EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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AMERICAN COUNCIL ON RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION
SIXTEENTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE
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INTRODUCTION

For decades the education of the deaf and hard of hearing in America has benefited from two critical features in the professional preparation of instructional personnel, particularly teachers. These two critical features are: (1) a sufficient number of comprehensive, quality teacher training programs at the college and university level; and, (2) experienced, qualified veteran teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing to receive beginning teachers and provide supervision of instruction.

In a very real sense, beginning teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing in America have had an **internship** which enabled them to enhance and extend their teaching knowledge and skills under the guidance of a master teacher. This is not always true in general education or in other areas of special education.

The availability of master teachers to plan, organize and manage the beginning teacher's internship is the result, in part, to the prevalence of state residential school placement options for the deaf and hard of hearing. Historically, this type of placement option for deaf and hard of hearing students provided quality internships for beginning teachers because they has a critical mass of deaf students, offered comprehensive programs, and, had experienced educators who helped develop the role of departmental supervisors.

We must acknowledge that the pioneer leadership in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing recognized the value and importance of an internship for the beginning teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.

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Perhaps the historical importance of the supervisor of instruction is best noted over fifty years ago by Mildred Groht (1939), Principal of the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York:

"In no field of education is the position of the supervising teacher more important or more necessary than schools for deaf children. Important because the type and quality of the classroom teaching done in any school for the deaf depends a very great extent upon the leadership of the supervising teacher."

The fundamental premise for continued quality instruction in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing is the existence of quality, comprehensive pre-service educational preparation programs and the provision of quality instructional supervision by a qualified professional. As was noted by David Denton (1969) many years after Ms. Groht's statement:

"Staffing an educational program with a group of well trained and highly skilled teachers does not guarantee that the program will be a successful one; or even a good one. A beautifully conceived and masterfully designed course of study, similarly, gives no assurance that the consumers of the educational effort will benefit. The energy and skill of expert teachers are soon dissipated unless harnessed, directed, and applied to the learning of children through an organized effort which remains continually sensitive and responsive to the changing needs of individual children. This is the rationale for supervision."

The provision of quality instructional program supervision in the United States today has become a major problem in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. While pre-service training efforts continue to grow and meet changing needs, special education programs for deaf and hard of hearing students have suffered a serious shortage of qualified, master teachers to supervise instructional programs. Why is this?

Even a cursory review of enrollment demographics in the special education field of the education of the deaf and hard of hearing clearly shows the dramatic shift in the school enrollments from residential special schools to local educational agency programs. The results of this enrollment shift is the loss of critical mass (numbers) enrollments in state schools and the proliferation of many programs for deaf and hard of

hearing children with enrollments under twenty students. This "scattering" of enrollment of deaf and hard of hearing students in Local Education Agencies (LEA) programs is even more dramatic in rural areas where program enrollment is between 1-10 students.

The declining enrollments in special schools caused some to eliminate or reduce the number of Principals, Supervisors of Instruction, or Coordinators. The fragmented placements of students in various LEA programs has not warranted employment of an instructional leader except in the large, urban programs. This demographic reality is illustrated by data from the Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies at Gallaudet University:

Year:	Special School	LEA	Total
70-71	18,297 (45%)	22,812 (55%)	41,109
78-79	16,504 (31%)	36,802 (69%)	53,306 (*)
82-83	15,481 (27%)	30,962 (73%)	55,136 (*)
94-95	9,350 (19.6%)	38,266 (80.4%)	47,616

(*) Increased enrollment due to so-called "rubella bubble"

The fragmentation of enrollment of deaf and hard of hearing students is aptly summarized in *Counterpoint* (1991), an official publication of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

"The rapid proliferation of LEA school programs for the deaf and hard of hearing has focused a vacuum of expertise in the complexities and often technical strategies required in the educational programs and related services. This is especially true in rural and remote areas and regions. Very often there is only one deaf student in the entire school and majority of school placements that are fewer than three deaf or hard of hearing students in the school program."

The task before us, clearly, is to restructure supervision of instruction in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing -- to restore this very critical instructional leader to the field of educating deaf and hard of hearing children in the public schools in America.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE DECADE AHEAD

Accepting the premise that supervision of instruction is a critical role in the quality of education of deaf and hard of hearing children, the question is how to best prepare qualified personnel for this role for current programs in special education.

The proposition must recognize several relevant characteristics in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing today. These include: (1) the significant shift of enrollments from state residential schools, (2) the major role regular classroom teachers play in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children, many of whom are in rural areas, (3) the important contributions being made by related service specialists, (4) the focus for instructional leadership in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing being regional instead of site-based, and (5) the preparation of instructional leadership today for the education of the deaf and hard of hearing will be qualitatively different from the days of Mildred Groht in the first half of the century.

Several studies have made important observations about the changing mature of supervising instruction in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. Among these, Barry Griffing (1968) noted the evolving nature in stating:

"In an educational era in the education of the deaf (and hard of hearing) when there is pressure for improvement and innovation, the need for supervisory leadership is greater than ever before. There is need for more supervision than is presently available, and there is need for a different kind of supervision than previously provided..."

Griffing recognized that previous ideas of supervision implied managing or controlling what exists. His notion of "super-vision" recognized the emerging role of supervision of instructional leaders as one who understands the agencies vision/mission and has the knowledge, skills, attitudes and strategies to help people achieve quality instructional programs. An example of this conceptual view of instructional supervision was expressed by Patricia Braught (1967) which highlighted the modern approach of collaborative consultation:

"...an educational consultant or supervisor should approach his/her contribution to the over-all work in the school as a coordinator of communications and consultation --

attempting to draw people together to pool their knowledge and ideas."

Today, this different concept of supervision is cited by Lorna Idol, Ann Nevin and Phyllis Paolucci-Whitcomb (1994):

"Primarily, collaborative consultation is an interactive process that enables groups of people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems."

Idaho State University's ***Intermountain Instructional Leadership Program (IILP)*** is preparing Consultant Specialists: Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It is the training of instructional supervisors for educational programs for the deaf and hard of hearing. This is an Educational Specialist degree program designed to prepare a post-master's professional who will be able to provide instructional leadership to programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing students in a variety of school placement options; noting the particular demographics of these students in many LEA placements.

The training focus is designed to create a supervisory style that recognizes kinds of teachers (teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, regular teachers, resource specialists, related services specialists and others) with whom the Consultant Specialists must work in developing and improving instructional programs.

Training Consultant Specialists: Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in this program notes that the position in all probability will not be site-based; serving more appropriately a region or consortium of school districts. Sometimes school sites will be in rural regions of states.

Most critical in this training approach is the "supervisory style" which must be used to serve the educational programs. That is, the Consultant Specialist must learn and use a collaborative consultant approach. The professional preparation is planned to equip and enhance professional knowledge and skills so that he/she has a wide range of abilities to draw upon in using a collaborative consultation approach in working with schools, agencies, organizations, communities and parents to develop and improve the education for deaf and hard of hearing students. Collaborative consultation is an interactive, reciprocal, and mutual process of bringing resources together working toward common goals.

The prerequisite qualifications for training this new style of instructional supervisor which the Intermountain Instructional Leadership Program calls a Consultant Specialist: Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are as follows:

- Earned Masters Degree in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing
- Eligible for certification as a teacher by the Council on Deafness (CED)
- Completed a minimum of five years of successful classroom teaching the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Have at least two letters of recommendation with supporting profile evaluations.
- Eligible for admission to the Graduate School, Idaho State University.

Qualifications for post-masters university level study is assessed by evaluating both the *grade point average (GPA)* and the *Graduate Record Exam (GRE).*

The professional training program consists of fourteen months of training -- two summers, and one academic school year. The schedule is such that these Ed.S. students can enroll beginning in a summer and complete the program prior to the beginning of a new school year.

The training program consists of three major training components. The first of these are post-masters courses which students must take at Idaho State University in the following areas and total some 30 graduate credit hours:

- Curriculum Foundations and Development
- Research and Writing in Education
- Collaborative Consultation in Schools
- Administration and Supervision
- Planning and Evaluation
- Policies and Politics
- Professional Development in Education
- Educational Measurements
- Organization and Individual Behaviors

The second component of the training program is the planning and conduct of a professional study resulting in an Consultant Specialists paper. This study typically is planned during the first (Fall) semester and

conducted during the second (Spring) semester and concluding summer. The study and paper is planned to allow graduate students to pursue an issue or topic of interest to themselves. They each prepare a prospectus for approval by the Program Director.

The third component of the training plan is Practicum or Internship. Students are required to use the Spring semester for the practicum. They may return to their previous school, agency or organization with approval of the site administrator and the IILP Program Director. The practicum experience is varied depending upon the student, the site and the specific training needs identified with the student.

The site(s) of the practicum need not be a school or agency working exclusively with deaf and hard of hearing students. Working as an intern consultant in a State Department of Education, in a consortium of school districts, or a state/or community agency or organization will include the student in tasks and activities which teach skills and give experiences applicable to programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing students.

The IILP is developing a "Professional Leadership" series within its program as an added component. The Professional Leadership series is a wide exposure to instructional leaders in the field of the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. This component is being developed in cooperation with the University Media and Distance Learning Center. Eventually, ISU will be able to offer a number of one-hour seminar lectures via satellite for the students; with interactive participation.

Besides the obvious measures of success -- completion of the graduate education program and graduation, there are evaluations made on the professional performance of Ed.S. students. These include assessment of seven areas of performance:

- **Professional Preparation**: Demonstrates reasonable effort has been made to come prepared for a task or assignment.
- **Professional Performance**: Demonstrates skills in the quality of work performed in carrying out various assignments.
- **Professional Technical Skills**: Uses knowledge, skills and experiences in application toward task solutions.
- **Communications**: Demonstrates the capacity to work effectively with other professional staff, related service agencies and parents.
- **Professional Relations**: Works effectively with community agencies and outside organizations.

- **Research and Evaluation**: Application of research and evaluation methods and materials in working on tasks and assignments.

A performance manual has been developed and is used by practicum site supervisors to evaluate student performance.

The Consultant Specialists: Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing graduates will be characteristically different from the historical concept of the supervising teacher in that they will:

- Develop resources -Vs- Give advice;
- Build task teams -Vs- Plan and organize the work;
- Coordinate -Vs- Give direction; and,
- Confer -Vs- Tell.

SUMMARY

The Intermountain Instructional Leadership Program has several important professional goals. The fundamental purpose or mission of this program is to provide a high-caliber professional instructional leader to assist in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing in America.

The IILP, as a federally funded project, seeks to accomplish several objectives. These are:

1. **Place 15-20 Ed.S. qualified Program Specialists in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing in state education agencies, cooperative LEA areas, or consortium program regions serving local education programs.**
2. **Improve the identification of and recruitment of Masters level teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing who would be candidates for an Ed.S. Program Specialist role.**
3. **The availability of an Ed.S. Program Specialist professional preparation model which could be replicated on other rural state regions of the United States.**
4. **Promote regional, cooperative strategies for employment and assignment of Consultant Specialists to assist LEA programs.**

5. **Prompt additional training program developments to assist local public school programs/services for deaf and hard of hearing children.**

The outcomes of the project are a calculated strategy to bring leadership expertise to local public school programs. Its development by an appropriate training curriculum for the Consultant Specialist and its regionalized placement concepts for those personnel in rural areas will make a significant contribution to the development of appropriate, quality educational programs and services for students in rural area local public schools.

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